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REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 20, 2003, has been received and carefully considered. Claims 1-21 are pending in the present application. Reconsideration of the outstanding objections/rejections in the present application is respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication on page 4 of the Office Action that claims 4, 5, 11, 13, and 19-21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, Applicants have opted to defer rewriting the above-identified claims in independent form pending consideration of the arguments presented below with respect to the rejected claims.

I. THE ANTICIPATION REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-3, 6-10, 12, & 14-18

On pages 2-4 of the Office Action, claims 1-3, 6-10, 12, and 14-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gruetzner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,444,715). This rejection is hereby respectfully traversed.

Under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the Patent Office bears the burden of presenting at least a prima facie case of anticipation. In re Sun, 31 USPQ2d 1451, 1453 (Fed. Cir. 1993) (unpublished).